The WORD In Many Languages

An Exhibition

of Bibles

held in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

April-May 1975

"In the beginning was the Word."

It is appropriate that the first substantial book to be printed in moveable type is also the most influential of all books. The Gutenberg Bible was printed in Mainz about 1455 and by 1500 the Vulgate had been reprinted ninety-four times. By 1600 there were vernacular translations in almost every European language. In modern times, due chiefly to the efforts of the British and Foreign Bible Society and its off-shoots, the Bible may be read in practically every language and work is continuing to make it universally available in the vernacular. Today the Bible is the most widely read and the most often translated book in the world.

Case 1

Greek, Latin, Hebrew Bibles

The primary sources for the Old Testament text come from Hebrew manuscripts, for the New Testament text from Greek manuscripts; the various translations are of great value in establishing general accuracy and elucidating obscure and disputed passages. The earliest of the versions is that known as the Septuagint, a name derived from the tradition that the work was done by seventy translators. This, the Greek version of the Old Testament, was produced in Alexandria probably between the years 285 and 150 B.C. and was first printed in the Complutensian Polyglott (1514-17). The Old Testament on display (Londini, 1653) is the first of this version to be printed in England. It was edited, at the instigation of the printer, Roger Daniel, by the Unitarian controversialist, John Biddle (1615-1662) during his imprisonment by the Parliamentary Commissioners for his religious views.

With the publication of Erasmus' first Greek New Testament in 1516 there arose a revival of interest in the original texts which led to many other recensions. Perhaps the most important were those published by Robert Estienne (Robertus Stephanus) of Paris (1503-1559). His first Greek New Testament (Lutetiae, 1546) was based on comparisons of Erasmus' text, the Complutensian text and that of sixteen manuscripts. The type used was that cut by Claude Garamond (d. 1561) the beauty and clarity of which contributed greatly to the success of this edition known as "O mirificam" from the first words of the preface.

Perhaps the most famous Greek New Testament of the eighteenth century, printed in Oxford in 1707, was edited by John Mill (1645-1707), principal of St. Edmund Hall, Oxford. Mill was the first editor to attempt to give a clear and accurate description of the manuscripts used. He reprinted the text of Estienne's third recension (1550) and added the variant readings at the foot of each page. This was his life work, on which he spent thirty years. He died a fortnight after its publication.

The Latin version of the Scriptures, commonly called the Vulgate, was the work of Saint Jerome who was commissioned by Pope Damasus about 382 A.D. to prepare an authoritative Latin text. The New Testament appeared first, and was mainly a revision of the existing Latin manuscripts. However, concluding that the Septuagint text was too corrupt to be used, Jerome translated the Old Testament direct from the original Hebrew. At first, the "editio vulgata" encountered considerable opposition, but gradually its own merits, having "both the dignity of a scholarly translation and the simple force of popular language", won it a unique place as "the Bible of Western Christendom for a thousand years". Not until 1546 was it declared, by the Council of Trent, to be the "authentic" Latin version. The Biblia latina (Venice 1481), printed by Johannes Herbort for Johannes de Colonia and Nicolaus Jenson, was the first to contain the commentary of Nicolaus de Lyra (d. 1349) which "may be said to mark the first beginnings of a school of natural exegesis". It was used by Luther and influenced some of his writings. Indeed it has been said:

"Si Lyra non lyrasset
Lutherus non saltasset."

The earliest genuine attempt at a critical edition of the Vulgate text was made in the first of the series of Latin Bibles printed by Robert Estienne at Paris in 1528. This recension was the work of Estienne himself and incurred the censure of the Theological Faculty of Paris on account of the supposed heretical tendency of some of the marginal notes. Nevertheless it went through many editions. Estienne's second separate edition of the New Testament (Parisiis, 1541) was printed under the title Evangelivm secundum Matthaeum, secundum Marcum, secundum Lucam, secundum Iohannem.

Because an imperial edict had prohibited all suspected Bibles in Latin, French and Dutch, including those of Estienne, the Theological Faculty of the University of Louvain was ordered to prepare duly authorized editions in these languages. The first Louvain recension in Latin, which actually used the text of Estienne's edition of 1538-40 though with some textual and marginal modifications, appeared in 1547. The Biblia shown (Venetiis, 1578) is a reprint of this Louvain text.

Between 1539 and 1544 and again between 1544 and 1546, Robert Estienne published the Old Testament in Hebrew. He based the text on that edited by Jacob ben Hayyīm, of Tunis, which had first appeared in Daniel Bomberg's Venetian edition (1524-25). The volume on display belongs probably to the second issue and contains only Joshua & Judges, Samuel and Kings; these titles being supplied in Latin.

The first attempt at a critical Hebrew edition was not made until 1720 when the Biblia Hebraica edited by Johann Heinrich Michaelis (1668-1738) was printed at Halle. Michaelis was the chief director of A.H. Francke's "Collegium orientale theologicum", a practical school of biblical and oriental philology, unique at that time, and a member of a family influential at the University of Halle during its famous period known as Pietism.

Case 2

Polyglotts

The second of the great polyglott Bibles, known as the Antwerp, Royal or Plantin's Polyglott, was printed in eight volumes between 1569 and 1572. It was projected by the printer, Christophe Plantin, edited by Benedictus Arias Montanus (1527-1598), one of the most learned Oriental scholars of the age, and produced under the patronage of Philip II of Spain. The five languages represented are Hebrew, Chaldee, Greek, Latin and Syriac. Volume 3 is open at Psalm I, which is printed in four columns across the two pages: Hebrew, Vulgate, literal Latin version of the Septuagint, Greek Septuagint; below is added the Chaldee paraphase side by side with a translation in Latin. The capital letters are hand coloured. On completion of the work, Arias refused a bishopric but accepted as recompense 2000 ducats, and the office of chaplain to the King. He later became Librarian of the Escurial. Of the 1200 or so copies printed, a great number were lost at sea on their way to Spain.

The fourth and last of the great polyglotts, known as the London or Walton's Polyglott, is the most accurate and best annotated of them all. It was printed in London, 1655-57, in six volumes and adds Ethiopic and Persian to the original five languages plus the Samaritan and Arabic of the third polyglott (Paris, 1629-45). The editor was Brian Walton, later Bishop of Chester, who conceived the idea of publishing an improved polyglott Bible. It was one of the earliest publications printed by subscription. The engraved title page to volume 1, as well as the maps and plates, are the work of Wenceslaus Hollar. The portrait of Walton is by Pierre Lombart (1620?-1681)

Case 3

Bibles in the vernacular: German, Italian, French, Dutch

The German Bible of 1466 was the first in the vernacular to appear in print. It was based on the Vulgate text and the translation was unwieldy and unidiomatic. But the version of Martin Luther (1483-1546) published between 1522 and 1534, not only became the most widely read book in German but had a profound effect on the German language itself, becoming in fact the basis of modern High German. To achieve this, Luther listened carefully to the speech of the people. As he explains:

> "One has to ask the mother in her home, the children in the street, the common man in the market-place, and look at their mouths to see how they speak, and thence interpret it to one-self, and so make them understand."

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An example of Luther's version is the Biblia printed at Nürnberg in 1717. It is profusely illustrated.

La Bibia, printed at Geneva in 1562 for the use of Protestant refugees there, is a revised and corrected edition of the translation into Italian by Antonio Brucioli (fl. 1522-1546) which was first published in Venice in 1532. This revision is ascribed to Filippo Rusticio and closely resembles contemporary French and English Bibles also printed at Geneva.

The Louvain edition of the Latin Bible (1547) was followed in 1548 by the Dutch Bible and in 1550 by the French. La Saincte Bible (Paris, 1586) is a re-issue of this French version which was based on the work of Jacques Le Fèvre d'Étaples (d. 1537) whose New Testament of 1523 and complete Bible of 1530 have formed the basis for all subsequent French versions, Protestant as well as Roman Catholic.

The Antwerp Bible of 1599 became the standard Bible for Dutch Roman Catholics. It was based on the Louvain edition of 1548 and again revised by members of the Louvain theological faculty. The Biblia Sacra (Antwerp, 1657) is a new and illustrated edition with further revision in the New Testament by Hendrik van den Leemputte.

Case 4

Bibles in the vernacular: Church Slavic, Hungarian, Gitano, Irish, Gaelic, Tahitian, Maori

The Slavonic or Church Slavic version represents one of the earliest attempts in Europe to translate the Bible into the vernacular and is said to have been made in the second half of the ninth century. The Psalter (Moscow, 1619) is printed in ecclesiastical "Tserkovni" characters, the ancient form of Cyrillic.

The earliest complete Bible in Hungarian (Visoly, 1590) was translated by Gáspár Károli (1529-1591) and had a profound effect on the religion, national life and literature of the Magyars. In 1626 an attempt was made to counteract this influence by the publication at Vienna of Szent Biblia, a Roman Catholic version based on the Vulgate. It was translated by the Jesuit, György Káldi (1572-1634) under the patronage of the Primate of Hungary, Péter Pázmány.

In 1835 George Borrow (1803-1881) was sent to Spain by the British and Foreign Bible Society "as its agent, for the purpose of printing and circulating the Scriptures". A very fine linguist, he translated St. Luke's Gospel into Gitano or Gypsy Spanish (Madrid, 1837). Only 250 copies were printed; it is said that some were carried as charms by gypsies.

The first edition of the Bible in Irish characters printed for the

British and Foreign Bible Society had appeared in 1827 and was edited by James McQuige. A corrected reprint was edited for the Hibernian Bible Society in 1830 by Edward O'Reilly, a Roman Catholic scholar. At the bottom of the pages are given variant readings of the text of the 1681-85 edition. The original translation of the New Testament into Irish was completed by William O'Donnell (d. 1628) and printed first in 1602; the Old Testament by William Bedell (1571-1642) and printed in 1685.

The Irish Bible was used in Scotland by the Gaelic speaking people up to the year 1767. In this year, however, an edition of the New Testament in their own dialect was provided for the Highlanders. It was translated from the Greek by James Stuart, a minister of Killin. Some members of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge had opposed the translation of the Scriptures into Gaelic on the grounds that it would exacerbate the differences between the English and Gaelic speaking people. Dr. Samuel Johnson wrote to the bookseller, William Drummond (13th August, 1766) on this subject:

> "Sir, I did not expect to hear that it could be, in an assembly convened for the propagation of Christian knowledge, a question whether any nation uninstructed in religion should receive instruction; or whether that instruction should be imparted to them by a translation of the holy books into their own language ... To omit for a year, or for a day, the most efficacious method of advancing Christianity, in compliance with any purposes that terminate on this side of the grave, is a crime."

The first edition of the whole Bible in a Polynesian language was that in Tahitian, Te Bibilia moa ra (London, 1838). It was translated by Henry Nott with help from his colleagues of the London Missionary Society and from a native called Tuahine. The Society first established its mission in Tahiti in 1797, Nott being one of the pioneer missionaries. For sixteen years they laboured among the native people without result, though they did reduce the language to writing. Then within two or three years, Christianity took complete hold and the Scriptures were in great demand.

Translation of the Bible into the Maori language (the alphabet consisting of only fourteen letters) was begun about 1824, by James Shepherd and others of the Church Missionary Society which had founded its New Zealand mission in 1814. Various portions of the Scriptures were printed between 1833 and 1862. Ko te Paipera Tapu ara (London, 1868) is the first edition of the complete Bible. It was carefully revised by W. Maunsell and others.

Cases 5-6

Bibles in the vernacular: English

Although the Bible in the vernacular was found in Europe soon after the invention of printing, no substantial part of it in English was printed

before 1525, no complete version until 1535, and none at all in England itself until 1536. There had, of course, been various translations, in particular the version directly from the Vulgate, supervised by John Wycliffe, completed probably by the end of 1382 and circulated widely in manuscript. However the Wycliffe New Testament was not printed until 1731, nor the complete Bible until 1850. The work of translation was much impeded by the so-called 'Constitutions of Clarendon' adopted by a synod in 1408 which declared it "heresy, under pain of excommunication, for anyone to translate on his own authority any text of holy Scripture in the English tongue, or even to read it unless the translation was approved by a bishop". In spite of this, William Caxton, in his Golden Legend (1483) included the lives of fourteen Old Testament characters based on the Vulgate text; and certain portions, such as the Lord's Prayer, were printed as part of other works.

By 1520 the effects of the German Reformation were being felt in England: there was increasing pressure for English translations and greater efforts by the bishops to suppress them. The Newe Testament dylygently corrected and compared with the Greke by Willyam Tindale (Antwerp, 1534) is a carefully revised edition of Tyndale's version of 1525, the first New Testament printed in English. Discovering that episcopal opposition was too strong, Tyndale left England to finish his work on the Continent. Although many of the 3000 copies printed were smuggled into England, only fragments have survived, most being publicly burnt by order of Cardinal Wolsey. Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London, was the first to burn copies. He had commissioned the merchant, Augustine Packington, to buy up as many as he could in Antwerp. Packington bought them direct from Tyndale, thus supplying the funds for the latter's revision of 1534. Said Tyndale:

> "I shall get money to bring myself out of debt, and the whole world will cry out against the burning of God's Word, and the overplus of the money that shall remain to me shall make me more studious to correct the said New Testament, and so newly to imprint the same once again."

Tyndale translated directly from the Greek, using as collateral helps the Vulgate, Erasmus' Greek-Latin version (1522) and Luther's German text (1522), and the result, like Luther's on the German, had a lasting effect on the English language.

> "He established a standard of Biblical translation which others followed. It is even of less moment that by far the greater part of his translation remains intact in our present Bibles than that his spirit animates the whole. He toiled faithfully himself, and where he failed he left to those who should come after the secret of success; he fixed the type according to which later labourers worked. His influence decided that our Bible should be popular, and not literary, speaking in a simple dialect, and that so by its simplicity it should be endowed with permanence." (Westcott)

In 1536 Tyndale died the death of a martyr, having spent the intervening years at work on his translation of the Old Testament.

The "editio princeps" of the English Bible was printed in 1535 and was translated by Miles Coverdale (1488-1568), Bishop of Exeter from 1551 to 1553, who was deprived of his see on the accession of Queen Mary and spent many years on the Continent. On view is The whole Byble (1550), the latest reprint issued during the translator's lifetime. Also shown is Coverdale's diglot Newe Testament (1538) containing the Vulgate text and his literal translation. It was printed by James Nicolson in London but was so full of errors and misprints that Coverdale repudiated it.

Because Coverdale's Bible was a "translation of translations" (those of the German and Latin versions), "it has never ranked as the true primary version of the English Bible. That proud position is held by the great 1537 Matthew's Bible, which enshrines the latest results of William Tindale's scholarship." Tyndale's work was continued by his literary executor, John Rogers, who went under the name of Thomas Matthew. Matthew's Bible welded together the best work of Tyndale and of Coverdale and added many controversial prologues and notes. The edition shown is that of 1549, a reprint of the 1537 edition, edited by Edmund Becke. Like Tyndale, Matthew was a zealous and extreme reformer and was the first martyr in the Marian persecution, being burnt at the stake in 1555.

Discovering that they had persuaded the King to grant a licence for Matthew's Bible when it was in fact practically the proscribed version of Tyndale, Thomas Cromwell and Archbishop Cranmer resolved to supersede it by a new version and entrusted the supervision of this project to Coverdale. The Byble in Englyshe of 1539 is known as the Great Bible on account of its large proportions. It was based on Matthew's Bible but without the polemical annotations. The printing was begun in Paris by François Regnault and supervised by Coverdale and the printer Richard Grafton. But the inquisitor-general got wind of the project and issued an order to stop the work and seize whatever had been printed. Coverdale and Grafton fled to London with some of the equipment and workmen and the edition was completed there in April 1539.

During the reign of Queen Mary (1553-58) many of the reformers sought refuge in Geneva and there began a revision of the whole Bible, considering the Great Bible to be both costly and unwieldy. William Whittingham (d. 1579) who succeeded John Knox as pastor of the English congregation, was chiefly responsible for this work with the assistance of Anthony Gilby (d. 1585) and Thomas Sampson (1517?-1589). The result was The Bible and Holy Scriptvres conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament (Geneva, 1560) known as the Geneva Bible. It at once became popular, although it was never formally recognized by authority. It embodied the latest result of biblical criticism, was portable and moderate in price, was conveniently cut up into verses and became the "people's Bible", as evidenced by the fact that there were at least 150 editions between 1560 and 1640. It is also known as the "Breeches" Bible (cf. Genesis III, 7).

Some time after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, an attempt was made by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker (1504-1575), to challenge the ever-growing popularity of the Geneva Bible. The Bishops' Bible was executed under royal and episcopal supervision with the assistance of many bishops and biblical scholars. It was printed by Richard Jugge in 1568,

profusely illustrated, and no expense was spared to make it attractive. In April 1571 the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury ordered that copies should be placed in every cathedral and, as far as possible, in every church. However, this version never achieved popularity, being nothing more than a revision of the Great Bible. It is sometimes called the "Treacle" Bible (cf. Jeremiah VIII, 22).

The Church of Rome had always opposed the circulation of the Bible in the vernacular, but, realising that it was being read by increasing numbers of people, it was decided to issue an English version which would be acceptable to the Church. This version was prepared by exiled Catholics of the English College of Rheims and The Nevv Testament of Iesvs Christ printed in 1582. It was translated from the Vulgate by Gregory Martin (d. 1582) under the supervision of William Allen and Richard Bristow. The Old Testament, under the title The Holie Bible, was not published, from lack of funds, until 1609-10, when the work was completed at Douai by members of the English College there. The whole Bible is known as the Rheims-Douai version, the Rheims New Testament having considerable influence on the terminology of the Authorized version of 1611.

The idea of the Bible that became known as the Authorized or King James' Version, was first broached by John Rainolds (1549-1607), the Puritan leader at the Hampton Court Conference of January 1604, called by King James VI to solve the religious differences in the Church of England. The King wholeheartedly agreed and set the work in motion so that its achievement was due chiefly to his interest and influence. He expressed his desire "that some special pains should be taken ... for one uniform translation to be done by the best learned men in both universities; after them to be revised by the bishops and the chief learned of the Church; from them to be presented to the Privy Council, and lastly to be ratified by his royal authority". The fifty or so revisers were divided into six sections, three working on the Old Testament, two on the New Testament, and one on the Apocrypha. The result was, in the words of Macaulay:

> "The English Bible - a book which if everything else in our language should perish, would alone suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power."

In 1611, Robert Barker printed the first edition. The Holy Bible on display is an edition of 1613, also printed by Barker. It is a "She" Bible (cf. Ruth III, 15) and is also known as the "Revenge" Bible (cf. Romans XII, 17).

Cases 7-8

Bibles in the vernacular: Indian and Eskimo

Algonquian groups

Massachuset

In 1631 John Eliot (1604-1690) the "Apostle to the Indians" joined

the Puritan emigration to Massachusetts. There he became "teacher" to the church at Roxbury near Boston and gradually involved himself in the evangelizing of the Indians, learned their language and by 1651 had established the first of the fourteen so-called "Indian praying villages". Great interest was taken in his work and in 1649 the "Corporation for the Promoting and Propagating the Gospel among the Indians of New England" (generally known as the New England Company) was founded as a direct result of his efforts. With its pecuniary assistance, Eliot slowly completed his translation of the Bible into the Massachuset language and by 1663 the whole version was in print. However, during King Philip's War (1675-1676) many of the 1500 copies printed disappeared and Eliot urged the Corporation to authorize a new edition. With the help of John Cotton of Plymouth, he undertook a thorough revision and the second edition was completed in the autumn of 1685. It, like the first, was printed at Cambridge, Mass., by Samuel Green. At the head of each chapter is a summary in English which did not appear in the first edition. Shown is one leaf from Ezekiel. Although the tribe for which this version was intended is now extinct, Eliot's laborious work constitutes "the earliest example in history of the translation and printing of the entire Bible in a new language as a means of evangelization" and is of considerable linguistic value.

Cree

James Evans (1801-1846) was already fluent in the Ojibway tongue and had translated parts of the Bible for the Indians of Upper Canada when in 1840 he went to Rupert's Land as superintendant of Wesleyan Methodist missions. While stationed at Rossville near Norway House at the northern end of Lake Winnipeg he soon mastered Cree and began the work of translating the Scriptures. In 1841 he invented syllabic characters, each of which represented one of the 36 principal sounds of the Cree language. This meant that as soon as these were learnt, the words could be easily read by the unlettered Indians. With this system Evans laid the foundation of education among the tribes and contributed greatly to the spreading of Christianity among the North American Indians as it proved readily adaptable to other languages. On a simple press constructed by himself, he printed some hymns and a few passages of Scripture while waiting for the printing press he had requested from England. It did not arrive until shortly before his own departure in 1845 and consequently it was under his successor William Mason (1813?-1893) that the Mission Press at Rossville really got under way. Various parts of the New Testament were printed by this Press but the complete Bible in Cree was published by the British and Foreign Bible Society (London, 1861-62). Although Mason's name appears on the title page as translator, the actual work was done by his assistants at Rossville, Henry Bird Steinhauer (1820-1884) an Ojibway Indian, and John Sinclair, a half breed. Mason and his wife Sophia returned to England to do the revision and see the Bible through the press, Sophia dying on completion of the last chapter. It is in the Western or Plains Cree dialect.

Albert Lacombe (1827-1916) was born at St. Sulpice, Que., ordained priest in 1848 and later joined the Oblate Order. One of the greatest missionaries of the Canadian west, he worked among the Cree, Blackfoot and Métis. In 1865 he founded the mission of St. Paul des Cris on the North Saskatchewan River. Among the works he translated into Plains Cree for the Indians at this mission was a Gospel harmony (Montréal, 1872).

The first translation into the Swampy or Eastern dialect of Cree, widely used in the lower valley of the Saskatchewan River, was that of St. Matthew's Gospel, printed in 1853. This was the work of James Hunter (1817-1881) of the Church Missionary Society who later became Archdeacon of Cumberland, Rupert's Land. It is in the Roman alphabet though Hunter in time was convinced of the superiority of the syllabic script.

Chippewa

The early translating of the Scriptures into the Chippewa or Ojibway language was chiefly the work of two Indian brothers, Peter and John Jones. In 1833 Peter Jones (1802-1856) was ordained a minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and served for over twenty years among his people. In 1835 his translation of Genesis was printed in Toronto for the Toronto Auxiliary Bible Society.

George Copway (1818-1863) also a Chippewa chief and a Wesleyan missionary, was educated in Illinois, became a prolific writer and lectured extensively in Europe and the United States. He collaborated with Sherman Hall (1800-1879) in a translation of St. Luke's Gospel (Boston, 1837) in which James Evans also assisted. On the title page Copway is referred to as "Indian preacher man" and Hall as "the one clothed in black". Hall was a congregational missionary from the United States and was responsible for reducing the Chippewa language to a readable system.

For many years Frederick Augustus O'Meara (1814-1888) was stationed as a missionary to the Ojibway Indians on Manitoulin Island. His translation of the New Testament appeared in 1854. O'Meara ended his life as rector of Port Hope, Ontario.

In May 1851 the Church Missionary Society learned that the Wesleyans were withdrawing from Moose Factory in the Hudson's Bay Territory and decided to take over that mission. The Society offered the post to John Horden (1828-1893) and gave him two weeks in which to marry and prepare before the departure of the one ship a year. Everything was accomplished and on June 8th Horden and his wife set sail. They arrived in the north at the end of August and here Horden spent the rest of his life. He at once began to learn Cree, within a few months was able to preach without an interpreter and began to teach the Indians to read according to Evans's syllabic system. At first all the texts had to be copied out by hand; then Horden sent his translation of the Book of Common Prayer to be printed in England. Instead, C.M.S. sent him a printing press and types, and a good supply of paper and bookbinding materials, all of which he had to learn to use from scratch. In 1872 Horden was consecrated first Bishop of Moosonee and by the time of his death had seen successful missions established amongst all the tribes within his vast diocese and had mastered Chippewa and Eskimo as well as Cree. In spite of his many responsibilities he continued the work of translation. In an edition of St. Matthew's Gospel (London, 1880) in Chippewa syllabic characters, he was assisted by the Indian John Sanders.

Micmac

Silas Tertius Rand (1810-1889) was born in Nova Scotia and spent his life among the Indians there, joining the Micmac Mission on its foundation in 1849 and becoming an expert on the Micmac language and folklore. All the editions of the Scriptures before 1870 were printed in phonetic characters according to the system of Isaac Pitman, Rand's intention being that anyone would then be able to read the text to the Indians without needing to understand the language himself. The book of Psalms (1859) was printed in Bath by Pitman. Later editions were printed in Roman alphabet as evinced by St. Matthew's Gospel, Chebooktook (Halifax) 1871.

Iroquian groups

Mohawk

The Mohawk chief Joseph Brant (1742-1807) was born in Ohio, fought on the British side during the American Revolution and, after the war, led his tribe to settle on the Grand River in Upper Canada. He translated part of the Gospels into Mohawk, that of St. Mark first appearing in a Book of Common Prayer in 1787. In 1829 this translation in diglot form was reprinted by the New-York District Bible Society.

The British and Foreign Bible Society was established in 1804, its dominant purpose being to make the Bible available to all who could read it, and the first foreign version printed under its auspices was St. John's Gospel (1804) in Mohawk and English. It was translated by Captain John Norton and intended to supplement Brant's St. Mark. Norton was a Cherokee by birth but lived from infancy among the Mohawks.

Later translations into Mohawk include that of St. Matthew (1831) made by Henry Aaron Hill, a Mohawk, and revised by John A. Wilkes, an Englishman fluent in the Mohawk tongue. By 1836 the whole of the New Testament except the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, was available in Mohawk.

Iroquois

The translation of the Gospels into Iroquois (Montreal, 1880) was made by Chief Joseph Onasakenrat (1845-1881) during his training for the Methodist ministry. He was originally educated for the Roman Catholic priesthood at a seminary in Montreal but was converted to Protestantism. At the time of his sudden death he was working on the translation of the rest of the Bible.

Cherokee

The Cherokee alphabet or syllabary was invented by Sequoyah (1770-1843), known as George Guess. Uneducated and unable to read Roman letters, he yet managed to work out a system that enabled his tribe to read their own language within a very short time. It was elaborated by Samuel Austin Worcester (1798-1859) a congregational clergyman who also looked after its casting into type and worked on the translation of the Bible into Cherokee. The New Testament (New York, 1860) was revised by C.C. Torrey and published by the American Bible Society.

Seneca

A diglot of Christ's Sermon on the Mount was printed for the American Tract Society in 1829, the translation into Seneca being done by two missionaries, Thompson S. Harris and James Young.

Other groups

Tsimshian or Zimshian

This Chimmesyan language, spoken by Indians on the Skeena River in British Columbia, was reduced to writing by William Ridley who in 1879 was consecrated Bishop of Caledonia, and who made all the translations of parts of the New Testament which were then published in London by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. St. John's Gospel appeared in 1889.

Slavé

Spoken by the Mackenzie River Indians, Slavé belongs to the Athapascan group of languages. The translations were printed in both Roman and syllabic characters, and were made chiefly by William Carpenter Bompas (1834-1906), Bishop successively of Athabaska, Mackenzie River, and Selkirk. The Gospel of St. Luke (London, 1890) is in the syllabic character.

Eskimo

Greenland

The Moravian Missionary Society had begun mission work in Greenland as early as 1733 and had translated various portions of the Bible during the 18th and early 19th centuries. A new edition of the New Testament, translated from Luther's German version by the missionary, J.C. Kleinschmidt, with the help of his colleagues and native assistants, was printed in 1822 specially for the use of the Moravian missionaries by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Labrador

The Moravians extended their mission from Greenland to Labrador and discovered that because of language differences new translations of the Scriptures would be necessary. The Gospels according to St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John (London, 1813) was edited for the use of the Labrador Eskimos by C.F. Burghardt, superintendant of the Moravian mission. The Gospel of St. John, although included on the title page, is not part of this text. It had been printed separately in 1810. The translation of the entire Bible into Eskimo was completed with the publication in 1871 of the Poetical books, Job to the Song of Solomon. Job, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon were translated by Friedrich Erdmann (1810-1873) who spent thirty-eight years in Labrador.

Hudson Bay

In 1876 Edmund James Peck (1850-1924) was sent by the Church Missionary Society at the request of Bishop Horden, to minister to the Eskimos of Hudson Bay. After struggling with the agglutinativeness of the Eskimo language he worked out a syllabic system based on that of James Evans. The first publication in this new script was Portions of the Holy Scripture (London, 1878) which Peck transcribed from the Moravian New Testament. Some years later he started another mission among the Eskimos of Cumberland Sound. The church which he built here, made of whale-bone and seal-skins, was eaten by starving dogs: one example of the vicissitudes of a missionary's life.

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